

The Clerk
National Assembly
NAIROBI



Dear Sir,

**REPORT ON THE FIRST MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIANS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN
AFRICA (APLESA) HELD IN DAR-ES-SALAAM, TANZANIA, 10 - 14
JULY, 1995**

Enclosed please find the above report for your information and record.

I would like once again to thank you for having nominated me to attend the above indicated meeting. This was the first meeting after the inauguration of the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa in Harare in October, 1994. I have enormously benefited from the meeting. The agenda for the meeting was well set and the topics discussed were appropriate to my work in our Parliamentary Library. I have attached to this report, copies of papers presented at the meeting.

Yours faithfully,

Isaac K. Songoro

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ASSOCIATION IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

A suggestion was made way back in 1986, that, within the organ of the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Librarians (SCECSAL) there should exist an interest group of Parliamentary Librarians. SCECSAL meets biannually and the idea was for personnel working in Parliamentary Libraries who were able to attend SCECSAL Conferences to avail themselves and meet as a distinct group in order to share experiences and compare notes as it were. This noble idea did not take off, due to a variety of reasons, among which were the inability of the people concerned to attend SCECSAL meetings due to lack of funding from the parent institutions.

The idea was revived in 1990 by Mr. Winford Gurure who was then Librarian of the Parliament of Zimbabwe. The idea of forming a regional organ for Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa was given a lot of support especially when Mr. Gurure attended the Satellite Meeting in Oslo, Norway, and the full conference in Stockholm, Sweden, of the International Federation of Library Associations and institutions (IFLA) in August 1990. IFLA is structured into Divisions and Round Tables. Within each Division are sections. The Section of Parliamentary Libraries is constituted within division one. Mr. Gurure was given a lot of encouragement to spearhead the formation of a regional organ of Parliamentary Librarians to follow pattern already existence in Canada, Australia, Asia and the Pacific.

In July, 1991, an approach was made to the International Development Research Centre (I.D.R.C.) regional office in Nairobi to fund a feasibility study into the possibility of the formation of a network of Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa. This was done and Mr. Gurure visited Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia.

The following suggestions were made thereafter:-

- (a) Formation of a steering committee to organise the intended organ of Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa. Members of the steering committee were:

R.R. Mwate of Zambia	-	Chairman
P.A. Ntomola of Tanzania	-	Vice-Chairman
W.H.C. Gurure of Zimbabwe	-	Co-ordinator
B.B. Liyawo of Malawi	-	vice Co-ordinator
- (b) The name of the organ be the association of Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa (APLESA)
- (c) An inaugural meeting of the Association to be convened only after all the necessary ground work has been completed and funds secured.

In 1994 IFLA Headquarters agreed to fund the inaugural meeting which was held in Harare, Zimbabwe from 11th to 13th October. The meeting was attended by eleven countries, namely: Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Harare meeting managed to draft and adopt the constitution of the association which I reproduce here in full.

ARTICLE 1:

NAME

SECTION 1: The name of the organisation shall be the Association of Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa (hereinafter referred to as the Association)

ARTICLE II

Purposes

The purposes and objectives of the Association shall be:

- (1) To exchange information and ideas relating to Parliamentary Library operations and procedures in the region;
- (2) To provide an information exchange network in the region which has at its purpose efficient, effective and rapid information retrieval;
- (3) To promote better co-operation between members of the Association;
- (4) To promote formal and/or informal training among members of the association; and
- (5) To promote the exchange of Parliamentary documents within the Association.

ARTICLE III

Membership

The membership of the association shall consist of all parliaments in Eastern and southern Africa

ARTICLE IV

Meetings

Section 1: Meetings shall be attended by Heads of Libraries and/or their immediate deputies.

Section 2: Such meetings shall be held annually.

Section 3: A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of representation from at least two-thirds of the Member Parliament.

ARTICLE V:

Funding:

The incoming substantive executive shall solicit the required funding for each meeting from respective parliaments, donor agencies, etc.

ARTICLE VI:

Voting:

Section 1: Voting at annual meetings shall be by member participants and each member parliament in good standing shall be entitled to cast one vote on any procedural question or question affecting the operation of the structure of the Association regardless of the number of delegates present from that parliament.

Section 2: Voting rights of any member may be delegated to any member or exercised by proxy.

ARTICLE VII:

Officers:

Section 1: The elected officers of the association shall be the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, Vice-Secretary and two Committee Members.

Section 2: Election of office-bearers shall be after every two years and each officer shall be eligible for two successive terms.

ARTICLE VIII:

Affiliation:

The association may co-operate with or establish relationships with such other groups, public or private as may seem most likely to advance the purposes of the association.

ARTICLE IX:

Amendments:

The association at any meeting may amend it's constitution by a two-thirds majority vote by all members present provided that, a notice of such amendments be filed with the secretary at least seven days prior to the meeting.

The Harare meeting also came ^{up} with several recommendations including the following:-

- (1) Parliaments should provide sufficient funds to enable libraries to function effectively in terms of collection development, attachments, study visits, formal and informal training.
- (2) Parliaments should promote the exchange of documents amongst members in the region.
- (3) Each parliament should be prepared and willing to host APLESA meetings at one time.
- (4) The association will maintain a regular Newsletter carrying articles on the latest changes or developments in individual Parliamentary Libraries.

In the election for the Association Executive, the following were chosen as office bearers for the next two years:

MRS. TEMBANI MTINE (ZAMBIA)	-	CHAIRPERSON
MR. PHILIP NTOMOLA (TANZANIA)	-	VICE-CHAIRPERSON
MR. BEXTER LIYAWO (MALAWI)	-	SECRETARY
MISS MOLEBATSI (BOTSWANA)	-	VICE-SECRETARY
MR. ISAAC SONGORO (KENYA)	-	COMMITTEE MEMBER
MR. MASAWI (ZIMBABWE)	-	COMMITTEE MEMBER

2. **FIRST MEETING OF PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIANS IN EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA (APLESA) HELD IN DAR-ES-SALAAM, TANZANIA 10 - 14 JULY, 1995**

This was the first meeting of APLESA after its inauguration in October, 1994, in Harare, Zimbabwe. On the basis of APLESA purposes and objectives, a forum is made for the exchange of both practical and intellectual deliberations among Parliamentary Librarians throughout Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. The idea that this first meeting should be held started immediately after the Harare inaugural ceremony where each participant was requested to sell the idea to his/her own organisation as to the possibility of hosting. Tanzania National Assembly showed enthusiasm and willingness to host this conference.

(A) **TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS AND ACCOMMODATION**

Due to unavailability of funds, I was not able to travel on 6th July, 1995 as earlier expected. I was however able to travel on Saturday, the 8th of July, 1995. I left Jomo Kenyatta International Airport at 6.15 p.m., a board the Kenya Airways for Dar-Es-Salaam. I arrived at Dar-Es-Salaam International Airport at 7.15 p.m. on the same day. On arrival I was received by Mr. Philip Ntomola, Chief Librarian of Tanzania National Assembly (Vice-Chairperson of APLESA), and Mr. Bexter Liyawo, Senior Assistant Librarian of Malawi National Assembly (Secretary of APLESA). With them were Parliamentary Librarians from South Africa and Lesotho who had arrived earlier in the day. We were then booked in Embassy Hotel

where we stayed ~~until~~ upto the end of the meeting on 14th July, 1995. I returned on 15th of July, 1995 a board Kenya Airways arriving at 9.30 p.m. The National Assembly of Tanzania should be commended for; accepting to host the first meeting of APLESA and for providing transport facilities for the delegates while within Tanzania.

(B) PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The conference was attended by officers from eight countries namely: Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, Zanzibar and Zimbabwe.

Three other countries, namely: Botswana, Swaziland and Namibia had expressed willingness/desire to attend but they could not make it due to circumstantial constraints.

The conference was attended by 11 participants, out of whom 8 were from outside Tanzania, and 3 were from Tanzania National Assembly. Also about 10 observers from various information centres within Tanzania attended the conference. We also had the Librarian of the Parliament of Norway who was sent by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to be the guest speaker.

The professional/career background of participants by country was as follows:-

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TABLE

3. PRE-CONFERENCE MEETING AND TOURS

Prior to the conference, I attended the Executive Committee meeting of which I am a member. This meeting was held on Sunday the 9th of July, 1995 at Tanzania National Assembly buildings in Dar-Es-Salaam. The meeting deliberated on the final arrangement of the conference. We had to make several changes on the conference agenda.

On Monday, the 10th of July, we had a privilege of touring the historic Zanzibar. While there, we paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of Zanzibar House of Representatives, the Honourable Ali Khamis Abdulla. He briefed us on the operations and composition of the House. The House comprises of 75 members out of whom 50 are elected. Out of the elected members, 29 are from Zanzibar while 21 are from Pemba. The Zanzibar Cabinet is comprised of 14 Ministers with portfolio, 4 without portfolio and 1 Chief Minister. Another interesting thing that we learned from the Honourable Speaker is that the House does not have a library where members could be provided with information services. We were however informed that plans are underway to set up a small library for the beginning. The Speaker was hopeful that the association of Parliamentary Librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa will take note of the situation and sensitise the need of establishing a library in Zanzibar House of Representatives.

4. OFFICIAL OPENING

The meeting was held at the Commission for Science and Technology building which is about 4 kilometres from Dar-Es-Salaam city.

The opening ceremony was presided over by the Clerk of the National Assembly of Tanzania, Mr. George Francis Mlawa on Tuesday the 11th day of July, 1995. In his opening speech, Mr. Mlawa emphasised the importance of the library as a key organ in the development of parliamentary business. He mentioned that it is indeed a blessing for our parliaments to have the association such as APLESA which, among others, will focus on the best way to serve members of parliament. He explained that since parliaments are there to solve people's problems, there is great need for accurate and timely information in order for solutions to be found. Some of the problems facing African countries that need solutions include, environmental degradation, population increase, unemployment, inadequacy of food, sicknesses and economic hardships. With some of our parliaments having gone multi-party or still undergoing the process of becoming multi-parties, it calls for a greater demand from parliamentarians for indispensable assistance to them not only for access to information, but also research, reference, documentation, computer and technical service and access to publications from other parliaments such as Hansards and committee Reports.

Mr. Mlawa also stressed the importance and need for co-operation of parliamentary libraries in Eastern and Southern Africa. The APLESA could play a leading role as far as exchange of information among members of parliaments is concerned.

5. PROCEEDINGS

Apart from the host country which was represented by 3 delegates, the rest of the participating countries were represented by one delegate each. Although Librarians from Namibia, Botswana and Swaziland had been invited, they could not make it due to circumstantial constraints. (For the programme details and the names of the delegates see Appendix A and B)

During the conference sessions, papers were delivered on:

The Role of Library/Librarian in a multi-party Parliament with emphasis on the information service (Mrs. Brit Floistad, Norway).

Research Service for parliamentarians and their relationship with parliamentary library (Mrs. Brit Floistad, Norway).

The need and importance of co-operation for Parliamentary Libraries in the region (Mr. B.B. Liyawo, Malawi).

The role of the library in the 21st century (Mr.P.A. Ntomola, Tanzania)

Each paper was followed by lively and meaningful discussions and numerous matters of common interest were shared by the attending delegates. Each delegate was given an opportunity to make contribution on each subject.

(a) THE ROLE OF LIBRARY/LIBRARIAN IN A MULTI-PARTY PARLIAMENT

Mrs. Brit Floistad from Norway presented a paper on the above subject on Tuesday the 11th of July, 1995. In tackling this subject, the opener dwelled mostly on the following areas with specific reference to Norwegian Parliament -

- (i) Library user group
- (ii) Organisation and location of library
- (iii) Library collection
- (iv) Library services

USER GROUP

The main users of a parliamentary library are members of parliament. This group of people normally work under a lot of pressure in seeking solutions to problems affecting their constituents in particular and the nation in general. Because of this, answers to their questions from a parliamentary library have to be given fast and in an accurate manner. It is also important that the parliamentary librarian informs

← members on regular basis on the library collection and services. This is

← particularly important as Members of parliament as a user group may change

← from time to time depending on the political situation in a given country.

Library
Parliamentary Librarian staff need to have a balanced attitude in serving Members of Parliament. Members of Parliament vary in terms of social background, educational level et cetera. While some may have a good reading culture, others may find libraries a bit boring and scaring. Because Members of Parliament represent various political parties and interests, it is essential for the library staff not to make personal political preferences and/or opinions to influence their work in any way.

LIBRARY ORGANISATION AND LOCATION

The three main information functions of a parliamentary library are:

- To mediate information to Members of Parliament and staff in relation to their work;
- To inform the public on what goes on in parliament; and
- To distribute and safekeep parliamentary papers.

There is a difference between information going to members of parliament and staff and information coming from parliament. Where as the former is the responsibility of the library, the latter may not only be the responsibility of the library but may also be the responsibility of a special information unit and a parliamentary archive. In the Norwegian parliament, the three functions mentioned above are divided between a parliamentary ~~archive~~ ^{archive} in charge of parliamentary documents and an information and documentation unit in charge of informing the public on parliamentary work.

For easy access, the parliamentary library should be situated in a central place. If the library is situated far from where members usually spend their time; Chamber, meeting rooms, cafeteria, members private rooms et cetera, there are less chances that they will make use of library services.

LIBRARY COLLECTION:

Since members of parliament have very little time for deeper reading, the library collection should consist of books covering broader subject areas. An up-dated and relevant collection of textbooks and journals in the fields of law, political science, economics and history will always constitute the basis of a parliamentary library. Other collection, should include; reference books, research reports, parliamentary papers and laws ~~of the country~~ from both within and outside the country. Periodicals and newspapers are ~~vial~~ ^{vital} materials in any parliamentary library

LIBRARY SERVICES

Delegates were also informed of the importance of a parliamentary library having a more offensive mediating of information. That means not just sitting and waiting for the user to come to the library, but to try to anticipate the needs and be in a forefront with information and knowledge. To offer effective reference services, a

parliamentary library need to have a reference-desk which should be sufficiently ^{staffed} staff. Somebody should be ^{at} the reference-desk at all times and more so requests from members should be clearly understood.

Other services that are essential in any parliamentary library include press cuttings and exhibitions. Press-clipping service is found in many parliamentary libraries. In most cases clippings are done from only national paper although foreign papers could be included. Various forms of exhibitions such as the recently acquired material is an essential service.

(b) **RESEARCH SERVICES AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO LIBRARY**

Research services are very vital in any parliament. Members of parliament will always ^{require} detailed background information in order to make meaningful and effective contributions both outside and inside the House. There was a general agreement among the delegates that for establishing a research unit, several factors have to be put into consideration. Among them include; distinguishing between research service and reference services, and the need for qualified personnel specialising in different fields. Research officers need to have the ability of presenting information in a professional ^{manner}. During the conference, there was lively discussion as whether a research unit should be separate or within the library. What came out was, that both research unit and library should work very closely in handling requests from members of parliament. Since members may hardly be aware of what is research and what is reference questions, it is the responsibility of the librarians to ^{pass over research questions to} the research unit. It is important that questions should always be directed to where they could be adequately answered.

(c) **THE NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF CO-OPERATION FOR PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES IN THE REGION**

The paper on the above subject was presented by Mr. Liyawo from Malawi on 12th July, 1995. Co-operation for parliamentary libraries is very vital as no library can claim to be self-sufficient. Parliamentary librarians from Eastern and Southern African need to have regular meetings and/or contacts where they could discuss common problems and seek solutions. Another area of co-operation that was highly emphasised is the exchange of documents such as newspapers and other parliamentary ^{documents}. It was however not made clear as how this could be done. The channel of transmitting documents in particular and information in general was not clearly defined. ^{The means of delivery} documents in good time to sister institutions may not be efficient enough. Another area of co-operation that need to be explored is the area of staff training. In order for parliamentary library staff to get proper training, there should be regular attachments and visits to our different parliaments within the region. These will enable the officers to gain experience by being exposed to what goes on outside their own institutions.

(d) **THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

The host librarian, Mr. Ntomola presented the above paper on 13th July, 19905. He attempted to visualise what ^{the} of parliamentary library we will need to have in the

next century. He particularly concentrated on the new technological changes in the field of information. The library of the 21st century will have its services fully computerised. So many technological changes that are currently taking place calls for more computer literacy and awareness in our institutions. Our libraries need to get fully prepared in order to meet the new challenges.

6. CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

Following the presentations and discussions of various of papers, certain resolutions were formulated and agreed upon. They included the following:

- (i) Being "one of a kind" in each country and having the responsibility of the important task of conveying information and knowledge to Members of Parliament, co-operation between parliamentary library in the Eastern and Southern Africa is essential.
- (ii) While no library can exist without the traditional printed sources, parliamentary libraries in developing countries will have to meet the challenge of the rapidly developing technologies and the information explosion by familiarising themselves and commencing with the implementation of these technologies.
- (iii) There should be regular attachments and/or exchange of parliamentary library staff within Eastern and Southern Africa.
- (i) the venue for the next meeting will be Cape Town, South Africa.

Appropriate dates:

1st preference: June, 1996

2nd preference: September, 1996

3rd preference: between June and September, 1996

- (v) The theme of next year's meeting will be:
FUNCTIONING OF A MODERN PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY
IN AFRICA

7. CLOSURE OF THE CONFERENCE

8. CONFERENCE EVALUATION

As a delegate from the Kenya National Assembly library, I found the meeting to be a very valuable experience. The meeting underlined the fact that parliamentarian librarians are faced with unique problems and challenges. An association like APLESA has the potential to play an important role in providing support and distributing information among its member ~~of~~ parliaments.

The subjects discussed at the meeting were all relevant to my duties as a parliamentary librarian. I was able to learn from my colleagues from multi-party parliaments like Norway and South Africa on how to relate to members of different political parties in terms of information services. In any multi-party parliament, it

is essential for library staff not to make personal political preference and opinions as this will be viewed as being partisan. Confidentiality is also very important especially when providing answers to members request or questions. The result from a member's request is for the requester only and should not be presented to other members without his consent. A parliamentary librarian need to be updated on the various issues to be dealt with in parliament and to anticipate the future needs of members.

9. CONCLUSION:

In the course of our discussions, it became clear that there was still much ground work to be done towards the realization of certain of our set goals and/or objectives especially the implementation of exchange of documents and initiation of informal training programmes among members of the association.

Now that the parliamentary librarians in Eastern and Southern Africa have found each other, they are in a much better position to deal with common challenges and problems. APLESA will however only succeed if the individual parliaments allow their librarians to be attending its meetings regularly and if the librarians are encouraged to play a role in its activities.

The Kenya National Assembly will have to decide upon the following:

- (1) Whether the department will be appointing a specific person (according to APLESA's constitution - either the librarian or his immediate deputies) as its APLESA representative to: (a) attend meetings regularly, (b) deal with correspondence, (c) be available to be elected to APLESA's executive committee.
- (2) Whether the Department will be willing to host future APLESA meetings; and
- (c) Whether the Kenya National Assembly will allow the library to send copies of Newspapers and other parliamentary papers to members of the association in exchange for any similar material they are able to send to us.

I.K. SONGORO
LIBRARIAN

24th July, 1995